



COLLABORATIVE LEARNING: AN AID TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATION CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive Education is one of the major challenges that our education system is facing. Many government and non-government policies are being made to curb these challenges. All the learners, with or without disabilities, have different pace of learning. They can only be benefitted when there is proper planning, adequate time management and teacher-student's partnership. This can help to focus more attention on inclusive classroom to find more effective ways on their teaching and learning. These new researched strategies in education pave an easy solution to the students with disabilities to receive the quality of education they deserve. One of the techniques that emerged out to be fruitful is collaborative learning. Collaborative learning is an effective teaching strategy for the students in the inclusive classrooms in terms of their social and academic development. It is only through collaborative efforts that students with disabilities together with non -disable students learn academic skills along with social skills of acceptance and tolerance of each other.

KEYWORDS: Inclusive Education, Collaborative Learning.

INTRODUCTION:

Inclusion is all about providing effective learning opportunities to all the students, disable and non-disable students, in a general setting. Therefore, to provide relevant and challenging work to the students, curriculum can be modified whenever necessary keeping the objectives in mind to provide a soothing environment to the students where they can think and learn simultaneously. It means making the curriculum more flexible and choosing the content from a lower level or higher level if when required. What is important is that no matter how they learn or perform, they should experience success and not failure. To learn new experiences, ideas or skills, students and teachers must work together for the crucial learning. One of the techniques that emerged out to be fruitful in teaching learning process is collaborative learning. Collaborative learning is a significant shift away from the typical teacher- centred or lecture-centred classrooms to an active and live interactive classroom. It can work as wonder in the achievements of learners in Inclusive classrooms. With other teaching learning processes existing in the classroom it also works alongside based in students' participation and active work with the curriculum.

Collaboration and collaborative learning have been a part of our culture from the beginning of our evolution; we are inherently social beings and social learners. When collaborative learning techniques are used to support instruction, students tend to be more engaged, retain information better, and have better learning outcomes than those of individual learners. (McLaren, 2014)

The shared learning among the learners provide an opportunity to engage in discussion, take responsibility for their own learning, and thus become critical thinkers. Proponents of Collaborative Learning claim that the active exchange of ideas within small groups not only increases interest among the participants but also promotes critical thinking (Gokhale, A.A., 1995)

Some mention collaboration in terms of serving students with special needs, including students culturally or ethnically different as well as students with disabilities. (cited by Welch, 1998)

Building on the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, a broadened concept of inclusive education was adopted at the 48th Session of the International Conference on Education in 2008 as "an ongoing process aimed at offering quality education for all while respecting diversity and the different needs and abilities, characteristics and learning expectations of the students and communities, eliminating all forms of discrimination".

"Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system." (Article 2, Salamanca Statement)

Grouping of students, assignment of tasks, and individual and group outcomes should facilitate responsibility for mutual participation and learning. Full

engagement of teachers in monitoring student understanding through questioning and clarification is essential if all students are expected to acquire and understand required content.

The present paper is an empirical study of few private and government schools about their strategies adopted by them for catering the diverse needs of the learners.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY:

Along with other existing teaching practices, educationists, teachers and school administrators are focussing to build up various strategies to cater learners of diverse need. As a response to this, many new strategies are gaining importance in the educational field.

Srinivas, H. (2011) defines collaborative learning (CL) as an educational approach to teaching and learning in which groups of learners work together to solve problems, complete tasks or create a product. Within this CL environment, learners are exposed both socially and emotionally when listening different perspectives from their peers, and they are required to defend their own ideas.

Collaboration technique is crucially important for putting the process of inclusive education into action in the most effective and efficient way.

If appropriate guidance and right direction is provided to the students of diverse needs, inclusion will help them to develop social acceptance and positive peer interaction. Students with individual differences learn to tolerate each other with cordial settings. Now it is very necessary for a teacher and educational administrators to embrace the diversity of learners and cater them with the most suitable and efficient techniques to bring out the latent talent and individuality. With this, investigators think to know the workability of such strategies to empower the students.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

To study how far Principals' as leaders of school administration take care to develop collaborative learning as a program to help all learners of inclusion to be competent in academics and social skills.

METHOD:

In the present study, analysis of the responses of the Principals' to the semi structured interview was done.

Sample: The samples of the study were 6 principals of private schools and 6 principals of aided schools in Uttar Pradesh.

Tools of the study: The tool used in the study was semi-structured interview scale consisting of 10 interview questions.

CONCLUSION:

The following are the opinions and practices implemented by the schools to cater the needs of inclusive education in teaching learning with respect to collaborative learning.

Various transactional methods were employed for curriculum transaction under the setting of collaborative learning like brainstorming, street play, quiz, discussion forum, peer teaching etc. Remedial and tutorial system is employed in case of need basis.

In almost all the private schools there was strong evidence that attempts to foster inclusive practices associated with significant improvements in terms of the presence, participation and achievement of pupils.

It was observed that in aided school, the teacher's unpreparedness often leads to a feeling of helplessness and incompetence among learners.

Positive learning outcomes are observed when students with disabilities are more likely to be at instructional level and when explanations and models are provided by their peers facilitated by teachers.

Inclusive practices are harder to implement in schools where large classes, fragmented schedules and a focus on specialisation inhibit collaboration amongst teachers.

Students learn cooperation and teamwork. According to Smith and MacGregor, 1992, 'In collaborative endeavors, students inevitably encounter difference, and must grapple with recognizing and working with it. Building the capacities for tolerating or resolving differences, for building agreement that honors all the voices in a group, for caring how others are doing -- these abilities are crucial aspects of living in a community. Too often the development of these values and skills is relegated to the "Student Life" side of the campus. Cultivation of teamwork, community building, and leadership skills are legitimate and valuable classroom goals, not just extracurricular ones.'

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